REMARKS

In response to the Office Action of the 27 February 2003, the Applicant has amended Claims 1, 4, 8 and 9 to overcome the objections raised by the examiner and to further distinguish over the art cited by the examiner.

The objections under 35 USC112 have been overcome in Claim 4 by reciting that the secondary flow metering device is movable relative to the supply roller between an operative position and the retracted position. Thus, the function of the transfer mechanism is fully set forth.

With respect to Claim 8, the word "as" has been changed to "a" and in Claim 9, the word "if" has been changed to "of" and "body portion" changed to blade portion. It is believed that these amendments to claims 4, 8 and 9 overcome the 35USC112 objections and therefore place the claims in condition for allowance.

The examiner has rejected Claim 1 on the basis of U.S. Patent 4,688,482 to Tobias. The Tobias reference shows an ink transfer arrangement in which a blade 25 is oscillated between a pair of rollers 15, 29 to transfer ink between the rollers. Thus, in one position as shown in 25d in Figure 4, the blade removes the flow of ink from the roller and moves it to the roller 29 when in the position 25f. The blade 25d thus either removes all of the flow from the surface of the roller 15 or none of the flow from the surface of the roller 15.

By contrast, the invention described in the present application provides a constant metering of the flow on the supply roller to split the flow into secondary and tertiary flows. The tertiary flow is supplied to the press and the secondary flow is returned to the reservoir in the preferred embodiment. Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize the distinction over Tobias by reciting that the secondary flow, i.e., the flow that remains on the roller, is continuous and constant. By contrast, the Tobias reference provides an intermittent flow on the surface of the roller so that the secondary flow is either not present or corresponds to the primary flow. Claim 1 as amended therefore clearly and patently distinguishes over Tobias.

As noted in the introduction of the specification, modern printing presses require an equilibrium in the ink transfer process. Clearly, Tobias does not provide a system in which such equilibrium is achieved and, more importantly, does not provide a system in which the volume of ink transferred can readily be determined. The Tobias reference assumes that all of the ink

carried by the roller is transferred by movement of the blade and therefore does not take into account ink which is not effectively removed by the blade, whilst that it is in a position against the roller.

By contrast, by dividing the primary flow into secondary and tertiary flows, the blade in the preferred embodiment of the present invention ensures a continuous and constant flow back to the reservoir and thereby ensures a constant transfer rate through the tertiary flow.

It is believed that Claim 1 therefore clearly and patently distinguishes over the reference and is in condition for allowance. Similarly, the claims dependent upon Claim 1 are believed to be allowable. Independent Claims 8 and 9 are also believed to be in condition for allowance and claims dependent on Claim 9, likewise allowable. Accordingly, further action to allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

27 May 2003
Date

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